

MANY GIRLS TAKE UP BAREFOOT DANCING OUTDOORS

Joyous Groups Everywhere, With Tossing Draperies and Windblown Locks, Trip to the Pipes of Pan—At Summer Camps and in Green Canopied Glades Hundreds of American Girls Practise "Nature Steps," Whirling About Among Garden Flowers

PAN, god of the great outdoors, is playing his pipes more merrily and madly than ever this summer. Those who know him well say that he is capering about on his shaggy, goatlike legs with unusual gaiety and that his knowing smile has deepened.

All this is because a host of young girls all over the land have caught the sound of his rosy notes and with bared feet, tossing draperies and windblown locks are dancing where he leads over the summer landscape. Sometimes singly, sometimes in joyous groups, they are following him over the cool grass, among the trees and along the streams, giving themselves over with happy abandon to his spell.

The blithe god hasn't the slightest idea of course that outdoor dancing is the latest enthusiasm, the newest fad, of the wholesome American girl. He hasn't heard anything of the revival of the dance as an art or of a return to the pastoral charm of early Greek times in the outdoor life of modern women.

All he knows is that the spirit of youth is responding wholeheartedly, in the way it properly should, to the spirit of sheer joy that summer brings, and his pagan heart is glad. He probably thinks he has done it all himself with his magic pipes.

Poor Pan has had rather a lonely time of it in this country for centuries past. In fact, no one seemed to know he was here except for a few quiet folk who watched him in reserved silence and who evidently loved him but were afraid to show it. He missed the processions of devotees bringing offerings to his woodland shrine, as they did in the golden age.

No garlanded youths and flower decked maidens danced to his merry piping in the groves and meadows, as they used to do in his beloved Greece. And so he wandered solitary among the rushes,



DANCING ON NATURE'S STAGE.

Serious students of human kind insist that this revival of the ancient art of dancing, performed out of doors, is far more than a temporary fad. They see in it a particularly significant development of an instinct for rhythm and expression through movements of the body which is implanted deep in the human race.

"Dancing," said one such thinker the other day, "is the most fundamental and natural form of expression known. The primitive way of conveying thoughts and emotions was through bodily movements, and long before speech was developed all communication was held in this way. Dancing was the earliest mode of religious worship; it served as a declaration of war, as a sign of peace. In fact, the instinct for dancing is about the most universal one there is even today. Listen to the drum of patting feet at a musical comedy when there is a very pronounced rhythm. Even men who never dance will keep time to the music with their feet. The encyclopedia declares dancing to be 'the universal human expression by movements of the limbs

toward self-expression through some form of art, and there is no more normal way of cultivating this charming gift than by encouraging her to dance—not the waltz, the two-step, the turkey trot and the bunny hug, but to dance out her individual moods in the beautiful setting of nature."

Dancing as a Health Giver.

This new movement for out of door dancing is not only interesting because it is a new form of artistic expression for girls but it is valuable because of its healthfulness. One physical authority says that "vigorous dancing is to be classed with mountain climbing, paddling, running, tennis and other sports which are recognized as having the deepest effects upon the bodily health through more efficient circulation, digestion, elimination and temperature control."

As a matter of fact many parents welcome the new dancing fad because it is replacing the rougher sports which were tending to play havoc with the womanliness and gentleness of their

Already a good many young girls who were not strong enough for the more strenuous sports of swimming, tennis, or horseback riding are gaining health through rhythmic dancing.

When the dance is taken out of doors the beneficial effect is even greater. To begin with, exchanging the heated air of the ballroom for the fresh outdoor atmosphere makes dancing a wholly different thing, so far as the girl's physical health is concerned. Then, too, the appeal out of doors is a wholesome one, when oftentimes indoors it is not. The girl dances under the trees just for the pure joy of living; her mind is stimulated to healthy thoughts just as the body is stimulated to healthy action. One of the accepted conditions of effective exercise nowadays is that it shall be happy, that it shall renew the mind as well as the muscles. That outdoor dancing gives the girl keen joy is shown by the radiant faces of the young women who come barefooted from a merry fling in company with birds and waving branches.

Society girls and girls who are free to dance the summer through, if they wish, are not the only ones who are profiting by this new vogue for dancing out of doors. During the last year or so any number of busy young women at work in offices have found that nothing rests them so much, after close confinement at a desk, as a buoyant dance in the fresh air.

Many evening classes have been formed for the study of folk dancing and classic dancing, and these workaday damsels are learning to vary work and play in the most effective manner. After a long day in office or school room, with only a sedate walk at noon, the young woman is both too tired and too indifferent to take the exercise she needs. Even if she did take a brisk walk, it would be only a duty walk, for her mind is even more tired and jaded than her body.

This is where the dancing steps in and refreshes both her thought and her inert muscles. Within five minutes after she throws herself happily into a beautiful dance movement she is made over. Several tired girls have fallen into the habit of going out into a corner of a city park in the early evening and dancing in the cool pure air for a few minutes. The brisk motion sends the blood tingling, the girl breathes deep, the easy grace of movement delights her aesthetic sense and she is rested through and through, more rested than she could possibly be after hours of sleep or duty exercise.

The other day a young girl in a downtown office in New York leaned back wearily from her work. She looked worn, heavy eyed and depressed. For several hours she had been bending steadily over her typewriter. Her employer came to her and suggested that she go and lie down for a half hour. She laughed slightly.

"No," she said, "I don't care to lie down, but if I may go and dance for a few minutes I'll be all right."

"Dance?" said the astonished lawyer.

"Why, yes," she answered. "I don't need to be quiet. I've been too quiet for several hours now. What I need is exercise and motion and a big drink of air."

She went up in the elevator to the top of the building, stepped out on the roof and after inhaling all the fresh air she

tell her she was a mere flutter of steam like the thousands of curls of steam around her; bending and swaying with her arms curved above her head; skipping and prancing, her lips parted and a smile on her face. She must have been a pretty sight to idle clerks who may have been loafing during office hours in nearby windows.

She danced until she was breathless. Then she went back to her desk. Her eyes were bright, her cheeks full of color. Her circulation was doing active business. She went at her work again with zest and pleasure.

Dancing was not merely exercise to this girl, it was play. If she had gone out and gravely gone through gymnastic movements she might have rested her muscles, but her mind would have been as tired as ever. Instead she went up and got ten minutes worth of joyous good time.

Last year a group of girls in the Metropolitan Life Building used to get out on the roof at their noon hour and practise the interpretative dances they had learned in an evening class, and even create new dances. They would hum such things as Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and try to interpret it through the dance, or try to let their bodies express the grand beauty of Handel's "Largo." They had pleasure, and their employer said they worked better and faster work than ever before. He got results, so he encouraged the roof dancing.

The coming of this new form of interpretative dancing out of doors has already given many young women a congenial vocation. Although dancing has been the one thing toward which many girls have felt themselves drawn there has been in the past almost no way in which they could make the dance their profession, since there was practically no public field except the vaudeville stage or the ballet. Now the revival of the ancient art of interpretative dancing is solving this problem.

Inspired by the possibilities for individual creative work, as shown by the classical school and the Russian dancers in the last three years or so, American girls are beginning to take up the dance professionally. One young woman already has made a name for herself by dancing on private grounds for wealthy patrons. Another clever girl goes from one great country place to another in the summer, teaching the children to express themselves through dancing, not as it is taught in town but as it is prompted by the mood of the moment, by the beauty of the day and by all the gaiety of nature around them.

One girl this spring, who has been trying for a year or more to decide upon the work she wished to undertake, ran out upon the lawn one evening and danced barefooted to music which was played indoors. She had yielded, simply for her own pleasure, to the new dance movement which her friends were talking about. When she came in she said decidedly:

Found Her Vocation.

"Well, I've been discontented for a year because I didn't know what I wanted to do; but now I know. I'm going to be a successful outdoor dancer. I know I can do it because I've always loved to dance, and when you dance outdoors you are just inspired."

She has begun her study and outdoor practice, and is going to dance before some friends and critics on a beautiful pine wood stage this summer.

While any girl can go gayly out into the fields and dance and so gain as well as give pleasure through the return of the classic dance spirit, those who are taking up the dance professionally find that a course in technique is necessary before they can express themselves fully through dancing. In order to secure perfect control of the muscles and to gain the poise and balance essential to a perfectly graceful dance regular exercises are recommended for a time. Folk dancing gives excellent training as a basis for creative work; the Russian ballet training is perhaps the best foundation of all. Like any other art, it is necessary to get technique before one can work independently of it.

Pageants and festivals afford a rich opportunity for the new mode of dancing. The festival spirit is rapidly growing in this country and all of the many outdoor pageants and festivals include more or less symbolic dancing by youths and maidens, barefooted and clad in Grecian tunics or draperies.

Planning and executing these dances and training the young people and children who take part in them is coming to be a lucrative occupation for many young women who are turning their dancing talent to account nowadays, thanks to this new movement. Creative solo dancers are also finding new opportunities.

So far only a few men have taken up



GIRLS DANCING AT A SUMMER CAMP IN THE WOODS.

Blowing his reeds a bit plaintively along the water's edge.

But all that has been changed now. The coming of the classic dance, introduced during the last few years by Isadora Duncan and her followers, has fired the young womanhood of the country with tremendous enthusiasm for the new and freer mode of dancing, and since last summer the vogue of the nature dance has had an astonishing spread. It was rather slow in developing, but when it did come it came with a rush.

At first the girl merely looked on at the airily clad dancers unhampered by shoes and stockings—looked and admired and longed just a bit to do it herself. Then she began, somewhat warily, to try it behind closed doors. Presently classes were formed in private studios and drawing rooms and groups of girls began to get away from the measured steps of the ballroom dance and fling themselves into individual expression of the music no matter what its rhythm. Now and then an especially skilful dancer would cast aside her earlier prudery and delight her friends by dancing at private gatherings.

Pan Piped Seductively.

Then last summer the seductive pipes of Pan began to penetrate the thick walls and made themselves heard ever so faintly by these dancing maidens. The blue sky and the waving branches called to them. The dances they were doing really belonged out of doors, and all of a sudden out of doors they went to sway rapturously about at their sweet will in shade and sunshine. Some girls did not venture forth as unconsciously as others, to be sure.

While a great many young women who had become adept in the new art were persuaded to dance on the smooth-shaven lawns of great country estates for the friends of their hostesses there were a great many more who were far shyer and who merely danced in some deep woody retreat or alone in a gnarly apple orchard for the pure love of it.

This summer the new fad promises to spread even more widely. Society has taken it up and there will doubtless be open air dancing at many summer resorts and on the secluded lawns of beautiful country places. Girls at summer camps have discovered the delight of donning soft draperies in place of their smooth blouses and working out new nature dances as part of their life in the open, and at many camps such dancing is beginning to replace the rougher sports which were popular before.

In fact everywhere the girls will be dancing, so if you see an airy figure awaying to and fro under the apple boughs on the farm where you are going for the summer or spy a circle of fairies dancing in a distant meadow or surprise a barefoot maiden bending over a brook as you pass



A MODERN PAN, PIPING AMONG THE TREES.

you will know that they are not wood nymphs or dryads, but happy, healthy girls who are making friends with Pan.

Outdoor dancing is surely one of the prettiest pastimes girls have ever indulged in. It is a wholesome and natural pastime too, for to the average girl dancing is as instinctive and spontaneous as breathing, and the impulse which prompted the Greek maidens to express their buoyant joy in nature through the dance is just as inherent in the girl of today. This new movement is giving the modern girl a gift of self-expression of which the conventional mode of dancing has deprived her.

"Do you know," said one girl, flushed and breathless after a merry dance round

the sun dial in an old garden, "I've always wanted to do exactly this. Sometimes when I've waked up early in the morning and everything looked so fresh and green I've been just crazy to go out in my bare feet and dance on the grass."

"And a warm breezy day, with the smell of flowers in the air, has always made me want to get right out in the middle of it and dance and dance, round and round and up and down, like a little girl. But I always knew I'd feel like a fool and look like one too if I did it, so I never did. Now that it's the fad, though, I'm going to dance outdoors whenever I feel like it, and barefooted too if I want to. I never enjoyed anything so much in my life."



DANCING ON A GREAT COUNTRY ESTATE WILD ROSE SURROUNDED BY BUTTERFLIES.

and body of a sense of rhythm which is implanted among the primitive instincts of the animal world, and this is certainly true.

"This rhythm is the law of the whole universe. It governs the tides. The solar system moves in accord with it. Music rests on it. Human beings are particularly susceptible to rhythm, and we would all be dancing as freely and joyously as they did in the olden days if our modern civilization hadn't crushed out spontaneity of motion and the expression of human feeling through the dance and cramped our dance within a mathematical one, two, three or a three four measure."

"Isadora Duncan tells of a little child whom she had taught to dance who was seen one day down at the seashore unconsciously dancing in perfect rhythm with the movements of the waves. It makes one think of *Florisel's* remark to *Perdita* in 'Winter's Tale':

"When you do dance I wish you a wave of the sea."

"Women instinctively feel this impulse toward dancing much more strongly than do men. Dancing feeds the love for beauty and grace which is deeply ingrained in the woman nature. Deeds of prowess, exhibitions of strength and speed, splendid exertion—all these appeal to the man; while loveliness of line and color, grace of movement and an exquisite fitness in all she does are a woman's ideals in her activities."

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GRECIAN FRIEZE FROM WHICH OPEN AIR DANCERS TAKE SOME OF THEIR POSES.

daughters. Dancing is ideal exercise for the girls; it stimulates normal action of the body and builds up cells at a great rate without the danger of overexertion.

could she began to dance. For five or ten minutes she threw herself with happy abandon into the delight of dancing, high above the city; letting her imagination

the outdoor dancing, which shows that we are still far from the Greek ideal. But there are a few, and it is safe to predict that there will be many more.